Dover, as if doubling Cape Clear from the West. "Masters of the Channel for six hours, we are masters of the world," wrote the Emperor. This scheme was thwarted by the untimely death of the admiral.

However, a much grander one was evolved in September. Napoleon's policy of conciliating Spain by gifts and promises to the Duke of Parma had made the queen of that country his friend, and her criminal intimacy with Godoy, the Prince of the Peace, being already notorious, both she and her paramour paid the price of toleration by abject servility. At the First Consul's nod Spain invaded and humiliated Portugal, whose ships had aided Nelson in the Levant, and whose fine harbors were invaluable to England. At the peace of Amiens he gave the Spanish colony of Trinidad to England without consulting its owner, and he sold Louisiana in utter disregard of the right of redemption reserved by Spain. He now forced his ally to a monstrous treaty whereby she was to keep Portugal neutral, and increase her subsidy to the exorbitant sum of six million francs a month. This alliance made Napoleon absolute master of the Spanish maritime resources, when, in December, 1804, as was inevitable, war broke out between England and Spain: he commenced even earlier to act as if the French mastery of the seas were to be not for six hours, but forever. A feverish activity began in all his dockyards and arsenals; press-gangs ranged the harbor cities and seized all available sailors, and in a few weeks the imperial marine was nearly doubled in ships, guns, and men. Its efficiency unfortunately diminished in the direct ratio of its unwieldy size. Villeneuve, the new commander at Toulon, though capable in many ways, was only too well aware of the utter demoralization in French naval affairs. He was consequently destitute of all enthusiasm, and shy of the task imposed upon him.